

MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 3, 2009
MEETING OF THE PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Members Present: Erwin Mack, Chair; Alyce Ortuzar; Steve Friedman; Ken Hartman, BCC Regional Service Center; Jack Strausman; Al Roshdieh for Arthur Holmes, MCDOT; Alan Migdall; Peter Moe, MSHA, MHSO; Bill Bronrott Vice-Chair; John Britton, Municipal League; Justin Clarke, MNCPPC ; Lt. Jim Humphries, MCPD

Members Absent: Doris Depaz; James D'Andrea, MCPS; Councilmember Valerie Ervin; Colleen Mitchell

County Staff: Tom Pogue, Community Outreach, MCDOT; Jeff Dunckel, Pedestrian Safety Coordinator, MCDOT; Larry McGoogin, Safe Routes To School Coordinator, MCDOT; Fred Lees, MCDOT TEOS; Richard Romer, OLO; Bill Selby, MCDOT

Guests: Debby Dixon, WMCCAB; Richard Hoye, Councilmember Trachtenberg; Dell Longus; John Wetmore, Perils for Pedestrians TV

Premier Pre-Showing: Drive Safe Video

1. Committee Business:

- a. Review Minutes from July Meeting – Approval/Changes
- b. Thank You to Lt. Ron Smith and Chuck Kines
- c. Officially Welcome Lt. Jim Humphries and Justin Clarke
- d. Reappointments: Steve Friedman, Colleen Mitchell, Art Holmes, and John Britton
- e. Plans to Interview New Members
- f. Decision on Silver Spring Library
- g. Subcommittee Reports and Updates:
- h. Subcommittee Recommendation Form
- i. OLO Report on Speed Cameras –PTSAC Response/Summary

2. What is happening this year:

- a. Safe Routes to School Program Update
- b. Engineering
- c. Education
- d. Enforcement

3. Budget:

- a. What was funded in FY 10
- b. What was not funded in FY 10
- c. What should be requested for FY 11

4. New Business/Committee Comments:

- a. New Business

5. Adjourn

Before the meeting, committee had a pre-showing of the *Drive Safe* Video.

1. Committee Business:

Chairman Erwin Mack started the meeting promptly at 7:04 pm. Erwin thanked the committee for the hard work and dedication. Commending the work they are doing.

Review Minutes from July Meeting – Approval/Changes

The July 9, 2009 minutes were presented by Jeff Dunckel. Peter Moe noted that he was absent from the July 9 meeting.

MOTION: The minutes from July 2009 meeting was moved to discuss the minutes; called to vote, approved unanimously. Peter Moe's absence will be added into the final minutes before they are posted.

Chairman Mack expressed a **“Thank You”** to Lt. Ron Smith, John Howley, and Charles Kines members who are leaving the committee – they were given certificates of appreciation from Ike Leggett. These will be mailed to members leaving since they are not at the meeting tonight.

Mack officially welcomed Lt. James (Jim) Humphries and Justin Clarke – New members: Lt. James Humphries is taking Ron Smith’s place for MCPD. Justin Clarke replacing Chuck Kines from MNCPPC. A new contact list of members was distributed for members to update their contact information. This revised contact list will be distributed to the committee.

Reappointments: Steve Friedman, Colleen Mitchell, Art Holmes, and John Britton have all been approved for reappointment. Lt. Ron Smith was approved, but will now have the replaced by Lt. James Humphries. **New Members:** there is 1 vacancy as a result of John Howley having resigned – Dunckel, Mitchell, and Mack will be conducting interviews for new members later in September. We have received 12 applications that will be reviewed. We will select 4-6 individuals for interviewing the week of the September 14th and make our recommendation to the County Executive. There is a representative from the Disabilities Commission in the pool of applicants

Decision on Silver Spring Library- The County Council rejected the request to amend the Silver Spring Redevelopment Plan to allow the pedestrian bridge over Wayne Avenue. Mack noted that this Committee’s voice has been heard and their opinions respected. The PTSAC has been studying this since February and the conclusion is the bridge will not be built. The PTSAC still needs to make sure that pedestrian safety of those aging and with handicaps are being provided for on the ground level and that they are safe. Mack expressed thanks to Colleen Mitchell for coordinating the PTSAC’s work on this effort. Dunckel clarified that the County Executive and the County’s Libraries and Facilities Development folks feel strongly that the bridge is needed for handicapped access. The Executive Branch still feels strongly that the bridge is needed. The Council rejected the Executive’s request to amend the Silver Spring Redevelopment Plan, which is why the bridge can’t be built now. The building has been designed in such a way that a bridge could be added at a later date, perhaps when the Purple Line is constructed.

Subcommittee Reports and Updates: Dunckel stated that the PTSAC is going to new places by creating subcommittees to study issues in more detail and make recommendations to the full committee. Steve Friedman reported on the ***Bicycle Access and Safety Subcommittee (BASS)***. Friedman had worked diligently over the summer. . .but being summertime, most people were not available to meet or confer with. Friedman had to “go it alone.” It has now become apparent there were some misunderstandings on some of the issues. For example, Friedman referred to the road code when the issues being discussed pertained to vehicle code. Lt. Ron Smith was supposed to be a part of the committee but he left before this work could be done. Friedman wants police assistance on these issues. Lt. James Humphries, Ron Smith’s replacement, agreed to work with Friedman. The first recommendations submitted need more discussion – have police be a part of the next meeting of the subcommittee. This subcommittee is comprised of Steve Friedman, Peter Moe, Alan Migdall and Lt. James Humphries. Friedman is the chair.

BASS raised the issue of BRAC and adequate bicycle and pedestrian access – referencing the fact that there is a Department of Defense-funded survey/study to take a look at road designs and see if we can find a better balance between motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians - - what is proposed doesn’t limit future enhancements.

Richard Hoyer, staff for Councilmember Trachtenberg, stated this money is for projects not for surveying or studies. Peter Moe confirmed that \$750,000 is for bike lane and sidewalk improvements, to make specific improvements. Hoyer agreed that further study work needs to be done as the BASS report describes. Al Roshdieh stated the \$750,000 is being used in design, after which MCDOT will go back to the Council for funding of construction. Roshdieh also stated that the tunnel under MD355 had been changed from the original WMATA options. There is currently an application the County is submitting to construct a 58-foot wide shallow crossing under the MD355 roadway for pedestrian and bicycles. It could be expanded for vehicles in the future. This is a new concept; it doesn’t require elevators. A grant request will be submitted this month. Hoyer inquired where this was in the process – where it had been vetted - - and why the Council did not yet know about it. Roshdieh stated this is now with the Executive Branch; the project is a WMATA project, not a County project. WMATA evaluated 5 concepts. This one was also presented: this is the shallow tunnel, only wider to afford better access for peds, bikes, and possibly vehicles in the future.

Hoyer introduced a letter from the County Council to the PTSAC. The letter, signed by five members of the County

Council, requests that the PTSAC review the just-released WMATA study on five Medical Center Options for improved access. The Council wants input from the PTSAC on all the alternatives that were evaluated in the Metro report, as well as anything that has come up since then.

Roshdieh stated the only difference between the WMATA shallow tunnel option and the option the County is looking at, is the County option also accommodates bikes. He reiterated this project is not a County-constructed project; it is a WMATA project. But the Council will be briefed on the whole package when all the options are defined.

ACTION: Jack Strausman will lead a group, including Bill Bronrott and Justin Clarke, to attend a public meeting on September 15 on the BRAC project, review the WMATA study on Medical Center Station Access, and report back to the PTSAC what their recommendations are at the October 1 PTSAC meeting.

Mr. Friedman returned to the BASS recommendation regarding the change to the vehicle code, allowing bicycles to have an Idaho Stop (rolling stop) if there are no vehicles or pedestrians present or waiting at the intersection. Some members of the committee were concerned that this could promote cyclist running stop signs. Tom Pogue asked about the safety aspect to this issue – if allowing rolling stops would improve safety. Friedman stated these Idaho Stops allow bicyclist to ride more smoothly, more safely, without an accordion effect of having to stop when other bikes are following. Mr. Migdall stated it brings the law to reflect the real road conditions - - though this would have to be a law change on a State level. This could double the number of people who cycle, raising awareness of bicyclists, and hence their safety. Moe stated that the mechanics and the specifics of such a recommendation need to be reviewed.

Friedman discussed the next BASS recommendation: debris clean up after an accident, Friedman stated there was no reference in the vehicle code on who is responsible to cleaning the road after an accident. Lt. James Humphries stated it's in section 21-1111 and it specifically says whoever removes the vehicle after an accident is responsible for cleaning up the debris. If the tow-truck company comes to the scene, they clean it. If there is no tow truck, then the driver involved in the accident is responsible.

Friedman says the problem is there is no enforcement on debris cleanup and that is a safety issue for bicyclists. Alyce Ortuzar stated that the condition of debris along roadways in general is bad and is causing safety issues. Roshdieh pointed out that the County sweeps the roadways after winter season and that other areas are swept repeatedly, like watersheds protection areas, but the County does not have a regularly scheduled sweeping program other than after the winter season. If a resident calls and complains, MCDOT's Highway Services Division will come out and clean that specific area. Pogue noted the County relies heavily on 250 volunteer groups under the Adopt A Road program to keep roadsides clean.

Friedman identified another item of concern: providing a 3-foot law, where motorists and cyclists must give each other 3 feet of space when passing. Many Montgomery County roads do not have adequate bike lanes, sharrows or shoulders that provide sufficient space for cyclists. Dunkel mentioned the conflict with the new Road Code that calls for narrower lanes – some as narrow as 10 feet. With buses being 11 feet wide, with mirrors, providing a 3-foot space in such roadways could be a challenge. Migdall expressed the opinion that the 3 foot passing rule has no relation to the new Road Code, as the proposed 3-foot rule simply states that motorists must give cyclists sufficient space when they pass.

Friedman discussed the proposed Chevy Chase West Bike Connector Route. He asked whether this issue should remain because it is only a one mile stretch of bikeway and not large enough have County-wide impact?

West Chevy Chase has developed this plan is to use neighborhood streets to provide a bicycle connection between Friendship Heights and downtown Bethesda. This plan doesn't provide a direct or complete route to connect the two jurisdictions, which sees a sufficient volume of cyclists moving between the two either for commuting or recreational purposes. Additionally, not all jurisdictions affected by the plan are willing to contribute the funds to make the changes required to roads and alleys. BASS recommends that the PTSAC request the Council and Executive to provide a safe and direct route via road modifications on MD 355 where the first step would be to conduct an impact analysis of this proposed solution.

The final issue BASS raised was discussed by Alan Migdall. Migdall stated that lack of sufficient training of police on traffic laws pertaining to bicycles comes up periodically in the cycling community. There is a gap in MCPD training on

laws for cycling and bicycle safety issues. Migdall stated that he had a personal experience with this, where he was on a road and a car passed him. The driver hollered at him to get off the roadway. It ended up being a police car. Migdall wrote a letter to MCPD and has spoken to an instructor at the police academy. Migdall stated the instructor acknowledged the lack of police training related to bicycle law and on the need for improving training for police in this area.

Further discussion a between all parties will be made. Revisions to these proposals will be made, and presented to the committee at the next meeting. Mr. Mack thanked Mr. Friedman and Mr. Migdall on their efforts in reporting on the Subcommittee's work.

Innovative Pedestrian Signal Engineering Subcommittee – Alan Migdall reported that with all the summer traveling, this is currently a subcommittee of one, as only he had a meeting with the members of MCDOT's Traffic and Signals Unit on September 30. James D'Andrea and Alyce Ortuzar are the other two members of this subcommittee. Migdall has been gathering information and he has learned what the County can and cannot do - - what their constraints are. It was a very useful meeting and Migdall said he learned many things. The current direction for the subcommittee: it needs more info and the subcommittee needs to take a tour of the traffic control facility. It may also be useful to meet with MNCPPC – the County's Planning Department. When MCDOT does modeling, Migdall stated, it does so only at the single intersection level, and it models only car traffic which is a narrow focus. It needs to quantitatively reflect all modes.

Dunckel would like to get more members of the committee involved in these subcommittees. Now that summer is over, perhaps that will be possible. Chairman Mack thanked Migdall for his report.

Speed Humps Subcommittee: Subcommittee Chairman John Britton reported on the subcommittee's review of the issue. The purpose of the subcommittee is to assess whether or not the PTSAC should get involved by taking a stand on Speed Humps. Britton passed out a description/scope of speed humps. Britton explained the difference of a speed hump, a speed bump and speed table. This subcommittee was identified as Speed Humps, but perhaps these other traffic calming measures should be looked at as well. A hump is 3-inches high and goes across the whole road. That is a pretty narrow scope. Should this be a broader group on traffic calming devices instead of just focusing on speed humps? Britton reported that there needs clarification on the scope of the County's regulation and what municipal jurisdictions can (and cannot) do. There are specific criteria for where speed humps can be installed. It is spelled out in the County regulation. Britton will need to get input from others. Britton asked the defining question of the committee: "Where do we want to take this?" The County has 1200 speed humps and that far surpasses any other jurisdiction. Clearly the County is installing many speed humps. Britton asked the committee how and whether it wants to be involved in this process since the County already has a well-defined and an elaborate system in place to construct speed humps - - and that seems to be working.

Ortuzar asked if there was before and after data that could be reviewed. Roshdieh stated MCDOT has been doing this for many years (since the early 90s) and there has been continual tweaking of the program. There is a discussion with County Council scheduled for September 29th. This is to be a public forum on traffic calming. Pogue suggested the subcommittee attend the forum and get community feedback and see if there is a role for the PTSAC.

Chairman Mack directed Britton to review this and come back and let us know if we need to do anything on this.

Annual Report Subcommittee: This subcommittee is being chaired by Colleen Mitchell, with Ken Hartman and James D'Andrea agreeing to join the effort to draft the November Annual Report to the County Executive. Mitchell was not here to report on the report.

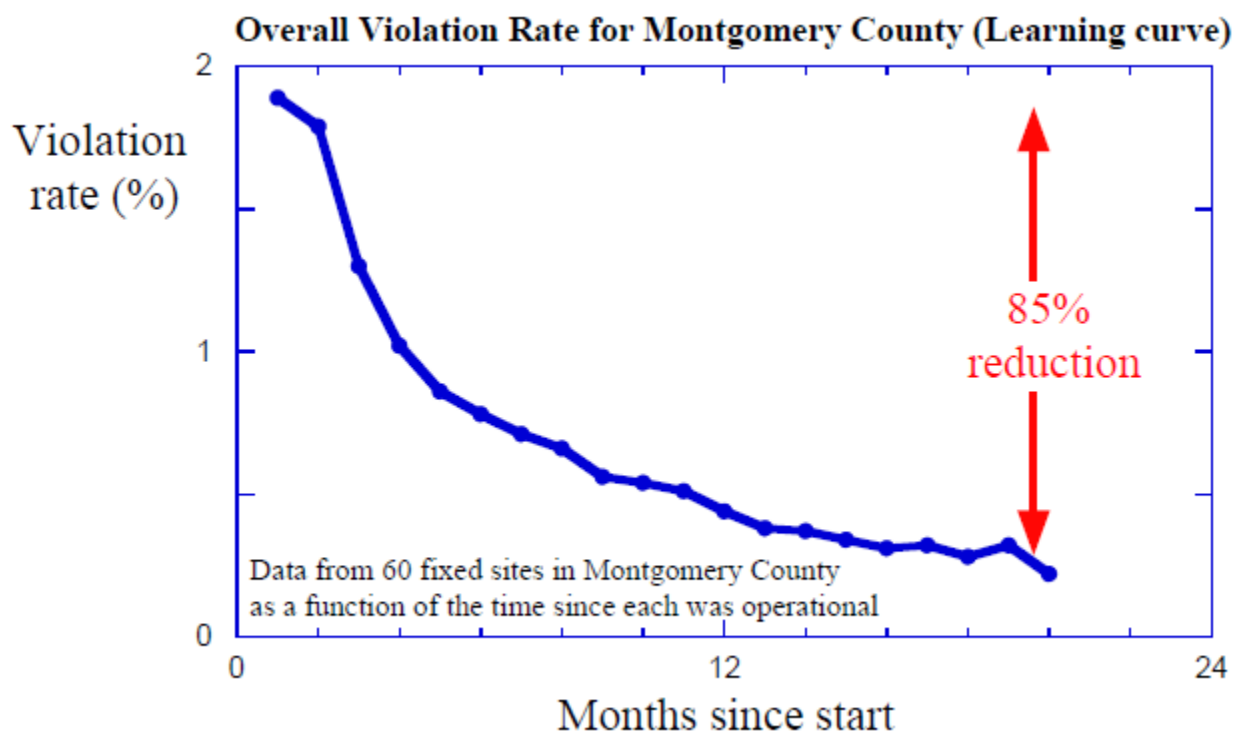
Mack called the committee's attention to a new **Subcommittee Recommendation Form** that had been distributed. Mack is currently working on this form. It is intended to be a structured way for subcommittees to present their reports and recommendations - - helping them to update the committee on their work.

OLO Report on Speed Cameras – Mack introduced the topic, discussing the PTSAC's Response/Summary. This came up between meetings. There were a number of emails exchanged between meetings so now it is on tonight's agenda. Since the group has refined its comments on the survey, Mack asked if the Committee was ready to take action to support it.

Richard Romer, of the County Council's Office of Legislative Oversight was introduced to discuss the survey and the summary of the PTSAC's response – this is part of the OLO report evaluating of County's Safe Speed program. His request to survey the committee was part of the public input section. OLO has national surveys and other surveys – they have also spoken to the group that reviews the locations of speed camera enforcement sites. Romer wanted to talk to the PTSAC on speed camera matters pertaining to Pedestrian Safety. Romer wanted to know what the Committee thinks of the program and how members feel about their knowledge of the program. What it has done in matters of changing drivers behaviors and improving pedestrian safety. Romer wanted to know if the committee had any suggestions about the speed camera program. He summarized all the great input and sent that back to the group, which started the email communications over the last two weeks.

Migdall requested a minor tweak to the last bullet - - wanted Romer to add language to look not just the engineering in terms of speed, but to encourage the program to look at all the designs parameters of the roadway. Sometimes speed is only a contributing factor - - there are other factors to consider. Moe was confused and asked for a specific example. Migdall says that as the goal of program is to increase safety the program should look at all factors, rather than just speed, that contribute to increasing, or decreasing safety, for example, crosswalk placement or efficiency of the pedestrian network (this might be how far out the way must a pedestrian go to get between destination).

Migdall handed out a chart (below) displaying the effect of the speed camera in reducing the numbers of vehicles violating the speed limit after fixed camera sites become operational.



MOTION: a motion was made to discuss in the survey and to approve the final version of the survey summary- that the Committee support the summary document as written (summary document distributed at meeting)

Lt. Humphries stated that he can educate the committee on most of the summary's bullets in two minutes. Humphries does agree that increasing education on site selection and education is needed. MCPD has a website for the Safe Speed program. MCPD is devoting money on updating the website – they hired a website company that is working on the site. It will explain the whole program, the locations of the cameras, and how the public is involved in these decision – before cameras go up it is put before a citizen board for approval. There is an extensive vetting process for camera locations. MCPD does not put sites at bottom of a hill. Cameras will not be placed in someone's front yard or on a curve - - the

road has to be straight with good sightlines. MCPD measures traffic speeds, the traffic flow, etc.. MCPD has no control on what other municipal jurisdictions do. If they do something bad, it gives the whole program a bad name. As far as visibility of the signs – MCPD installs yellow signs to draw attention to the speed limit sign and alert drivers that a speed zone is coming up. We do not have direct control over signage in State roads so MCPD works with the State on those locations. MCPD goes through all this effort because they don't want the program to get a bad reputation. The media coverage on this program too often states it is only to generate revenue - it is not. It is to slow traffic down, and with it, decrease the revenues from the program.

Moe – amended the motion to include accessing the engineering of the roadways under the speed camera evaluation to ensure safety measures exist for all those who travel. A second amendment to the motion was put forward: make sure the speed program is tightly connected/coordinated with the pedestrian safety program so that we are maximizing resources for pedestrian safety from the speed camera program. Hartman and Moe clarified – the motion is that there be more coordination between the Safe Speed Program and the Pedestrian Safety Initiative.

MOTION: the motion was put to a vote. It was approved with the amendments put forth.

MOTION: a motion was made for another amendment – to ensure the visibility of speed camera and speed limits by using adequate warning signs. Motion passed unanimously.

Mack talked about two issues that came up late and therefore were not on the agenda. - one is shrubbery and growth interfering with public access in roadways and another issue was bus stops that need to be eliminated because they cause problems. These two issues will be held for a later meeting. Mack asked Mr. Bronrott, Mr. Lee, and Mr. Dunkel to work with him to help decide what should and should not be on the agendas. Many people are calling Mack to request these issues in between the next meetings. He wants to be sure an issue is County related if it is to be put on the agenda. Mack will let folks know whether the bus stop or the shrubbery issue will be on a future agenda.

What is Happening This Year and the Budget: due to lack of time, these issues will be deferred to an October meeting.

New Business: Mr. Friedman mentions that 9/22 is car free day and to also check out the September issue of Bethesda Magazine in Health section will see some familiar names.

The next PTSAC meeting will be on October 1, 2009 - -same place. The Committee will cover items it was unable to discuss tonight.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:15 pm

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